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And, again, he says that the return of the provinces to France would mean, of course, the restoration of the former boundary between France and Germany—"a defective boundary that proved such a stumbling-block to the two nations and was more than anything else responsible for the outbreak of the war of 1870"—would mean, in short, the restoration of "an untenable line of demarcation between the two countries".

These are examples of the facile and confident assertions in which this book abounds. It would be most interesting to have some proof for the statement that a defective boundary was the chief cause of the Franco-Prussian War. Moreover why is the Rhine boundary any more untenable than any other? Any boundary is untenable if you haven't the force to protect it, and any boundary is tenable if you have. The Rhine proved no more untenable in 1870 than the Vosges in our own day. There have been times when Alps and Pyrenees and even the English Channel have proved tenable boundaries, and times when they have not.

Mr. Phillipson believes that if any change is to occur in the status of Alsace-Lorraine it must be only as a result of a plebiscite. He also believes in a negotiated peace, a peace without victory:

The best way to ascertain the sense of the population is by asking, without threats or pressure, each citizen to express his true sentiments and wishes; and the best time and circumstances in which to ascertain this is not when one or other alliance of belligerents is being worsted or has been vanquished, but when neither side can properly claim an outstanding victory, and when the terms of peace can be arranged by negotiation and compromise instead of being dictated at the point of the bayonet by a victorious belligerent (pp. 212-213).

Well! the world is spinning down a different groove and many of the author's suggestions have already been cast up on the bank and shoal of time, never to be tested as hoped.

The most curious and tantalizing thing about this book is why it should cost eight dollars.

CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN.

The Epistles of Erasmus from his Earliest Letters to his Fifty-third Year. By FRANCIS MORGAN NICHOLS. Volume III. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1918. Pp. xviii, 472. \$6.50.)

AFTER an interval of fourteen years the third volume of Dr. Nichols's translations from the Erasmus correspondence makes its appearance. The first volume came out in 1901, the second in 1904, and the material for the present one was practically completed in 1908.¹ The translator was then eighty-two years of age and conscious of failing powers, but

¹ See this *Review*, VII. 548; X. 686.

his life-long habit of painstaking accuracy would not allow him to put his work out of hand, and he died in 1915 leaving the manuscript very much as it was when he wrote his preface in 1908.

This volume appears with a short introduction by Mr. Percy Stafford Allen, whose edition of the letters in the original has accompanied the work of Dr. Nichols *pari passu*, his third volume (1913) including the correspondence down to June, 1519, while the translations close with the end of 1518. The account of the relations between editor and translator given by Mr. Allen is particularly appealing to all who cherish the amenities and abhor the pedantries of literature.

The general plan of the former volumes is carried on here. No attempt at completeness is made, some letters are simply referred to, parts of others are omitted, and preference in space is given to such as tend to illustrate most fully the personality of the writer. The period covered begins, according to Dr. Nichols's chronology, with August, 1517, and a few letters are included which he places earlier in that year. Short as the period is, it is one of great activity on the part of Erasmus, and also one of the most decisive importance for his whole later life. It is the period in which his attitude toward the Protestant Reformation was being determined by the constant pressure of all parties to win the support of the greatest single intellectual force in Europe. Erasmus, conscious of his power, eager to serve the one cause that seemed to him worth while, the cause of sound learning and its application to all human affairs, betrays in his letters far more than in his more carefully considered compositions the working of his mind upon the personal problem raised by the Lutheran outbreak—on which side he should throw the weight of his opinion.

An illustration of such self-revelation is found, for instance, in the long letter to Cardinal Wolsey, set by Dr. Nichols in May, 1517, but obviously of later date (Allen, 1519). It is here that Erasmus makes the fatuous claim that he has never read more than a page or two of Luther and knows no more about him than the veriest stranger. In this period fall also the very beautiful tribute to Thomas More in a letter to Ulrich von Hutten, and the letter to Budaeus on the controversy with the French theologian Lefèvre, one of the best illustrations of Erasmus's insistence on his love of peace while at the same time he is delivering his most vicious blows at an antagonist who, according to him, has provoked him beyond endurance.

As to the detail of translation little needs to be added to what we have said in former notices. There is the same careful choice of words and phrases, the same conscientiousness in rendering the spirit of the original, and the same freedom from literalness in form. It is greatly to be hoped that some equally well-qualified scholar, with many years before him, may be tempted to carry on the good work and give to the world of English readers the sequence of the Erasmian correspondence during the remaining eighteen years of the great humanist's life.

E. EMERTON.